

National Health Advisory Notification of MMR nationwide prioritisation

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This advisory has been sent separately to District Health Boards and Public Health Units

ACTIONS:

Please forward as required within your organisation

ADVISORY SUMMARY:

Canterbury DHB are undertaking a MMR vaccination campaign in response to a local outbreak of measles. They are prioritising vaccination of people aged 12 months to 28 years who have never received a measles or MMR vaccine.

It is essential that all practices outside of Canterbury maintain the National Immunisation Programme of MMR vaccination at ages 15 months and 4 years. There are sufficient national stocks of MMR vaccine to do this. Stocks are being managed carefully to meet everyone's needs. **Please order according to actual usage not anticipated demand.**

Additional stock is being sent to Canterbury for immunisation of older children and adults in that region who have not received a vaccine previously. Because of the constraints around vaccine supplies, we do not at this stage recommend that practices elsewhere in the country proactively recall older children and adults for catch up immunisation.

One dose of MMR or measles vaccine will protect 95% of vaccinated people against measles, so patients who have previously been vaccinated are likely to be protected. However if unvaccinated people request vaccination you should vaccinate if you have MMR vaccine. Otherwise please arrange vaccination at a later stage when demand on supplies has lessened.

The Ministry of Health is advising practices to be alert to the possibility of measles among patients.

MMR can be given to infants aged 6-11 months if there is a high risk of exposure to measles, for example travel to countries with serious outbreaks. The vaccine given to this age group can be entered on the NIR using your PMS high risk MMR vaccine option leaving the scheduled 15 month and 4 year MMR vaccine still to be given in the future as per the Immunisation Schedule. These younger infants will need two further doses of MMR as per the Immunisation Schedule since the effectiveness of the vaccine is lower in this age group. The additional vaccination at 6-11 months of age is funded.

At this stage, travel to Canterbury is not considered to carry the same level of risk as travel to countries with serious outbreaks.

For any further information, please consult the Communicable Disease Manual chapter regarding measles: www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/communicable-disease-control-manual/measles. Ministry of Health measles information is available at: www.health.govt.nz/your-health/conditions-and-treatments/diseases-and-illnesses/measles. The Immunisation Handbook chapter on measles is also a useful resource:

<https://www.health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/publications/immshandbook-11-measles-mar18-v2.pdf>.